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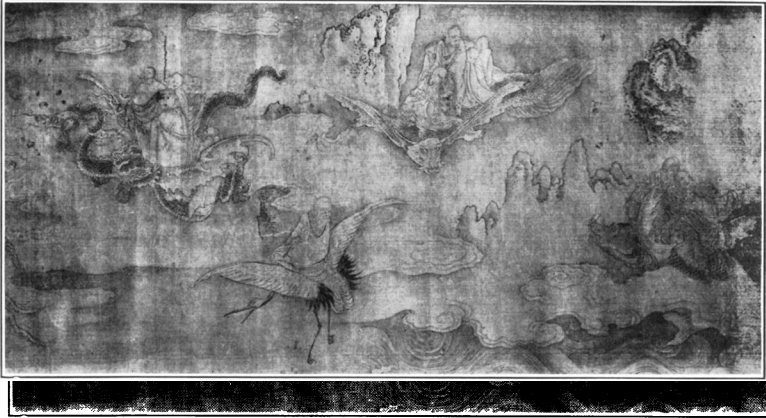
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HOLY MEN TRAVELING TO THE BUDDHIST HEAVEN  
STYLE OF LI LUNG-MIEN, 1060-1106

## RECENT ACCESSIONS

TWO CHINESE PAINTINGS BY LI LUNG-MIEN. In a Shanghai shop two Sung paintings, black and white drawings on scrolls, were seen last summer. The pieces had been reserved for the valuable collection of Chinese paintings which Charles L. Freer forms for the Smithsonian Institution and gives to the nation.

Through the helpful kindness of Mr. Freer the Museum was able to acquire these two paintings. Both are of the Li Lung-mien type and, as far as our light on the subject allows us now to judge, by the master himself; both are of high quality and very beautiful. The larger and more important one, also the finer, is attributed by the Chinese authorities to Tien tze Chin, a T'ang painter. It represents different Lohans and holy men traveling on dragons, phoenixes, and peacocks to the Buddhist Heaven, where Buddha receives them surrounded by Bodhisattvas in an apotheosis of wonderful clouds and rays of light. Taking this early attribution for what later investigations may prove it to be, the picture is to us an excellent example of what we consider the art of Li Lung-mien. Some former owner has succumbed to the temptation, so great to Chinese collectors, to refresh some of the faded lines; fortunately he was discreet and the few black retouches do not mar or

hide the beauty of the original picture. The delightfully drawn heads have been religiously spared and we can enjoy the spirited drawing of the heads of the anxious young priests who feel none too safe on the backs of their unwonted and heavenly steeds, crowded together on their phoenixes and dragons, till they reach at the end of the picture the glory of heaven in a marvelous composition of clouds and saints.

The second picture, more in the recognized Li Lung-mien style and certainly later in date, judging by the style of the Sung composition, represents a similar subject, but this time of Taoist saints traveling across the sea on equally unusual conveyances to an island where an aristocratic and superhuman couple receives them. Here also the figures and faces are charmingly drawn in well-felt outlines, but more with charm than with the robust beauty we find in the first painting. Both pictures are now exhibited in Room 9, Wing E, near where the other Chinese paintings are shown in turns.

S. C. B. R.

ACQUISITIONS EXHIBITED IN THE PRINT GALLERIES. Beginning April 17 there will be put on exhibition in the print galleries a selection of the prints acquired by the Museum through gift and purchase, with

the exception of those in the Dick Collection, since the establishment of the Department of Prints in December, 1916. During the nearly a year and a half that has elapsed since that time the Museum has received many most interesting gifts, which have been a silent but most effective testimony of the interest which collectors and the public have taken in its work. In purchasing, an attempt has been made to secure interesting examples of work in the several graphic media from the times of the primitives down to the present day, no effort having been made to get many prints by any one man, and few prints by men represented in the Dick Collection having been bought. The Museum has considered that printed pictures in all media fall within the scope of the Department of Prints, and has therefore proceeded without regard to any theory by which one kind of technique is regarded as being more artistic than another. There have thus entered the collection many line engravings and woodcuts, and a number of important lithographs. Moreover, the fact that a printed picture occurs as an illustration in a book has not prevented its acquisition, and wherever possible it has been acquired in the book for which it was originally intended rather than separately as a single sheet, as it is evident that a book illustration torn from its original setting of type and printed page must suffer a definite loss in character. Further, the acquisitions include a number of prints of ornament, such, for example, as embroidery patterns by Dürer, designs for cups and goblets by the Master of the Kraterography, Paul Flindt, and an anonymous German sixteenth-century engraver, patterns of designs intended for the decoration of flat surfaces in the precious metals by several Renaissance hands, and a series of plates of hand mirrors by Etienne de Laune. The most important single group acquired during the period in question consists of the sixty-six lots of old prints acquired at the sale of the Earl of Pembroke's collection, among them being many engravings and woodcuts of great rarity.

To give a complete list of the prints acquired or even of the names of artists repre-

sented is impossible within the limits of this notice, and it must therefore suffice to say that there will be seen on the gallery walls interesting and typical examples from the hands of a considerable number of the greater painter-gravers of past time. Of course many of these prints are well known, either in the original or in facsimiles, some of the most important being among the most familiar, such as the Dürers, Rembrandts, and Blakes; but there is an appreciable number little known, certainly on this side of the Atlantic, by either collectors or students, among them being engravings by such masters as Martin and Barthel Schongauer, Israel van Meckenem, Allart Claes, Jacopo de Barbari, Pollaiuolo, Mantegna, Julio Campagnola, and Marcantonio, etchings by Tiepolo, Gabriel de St. Aubin, and Camille Pissarro, aquatints by Goya, color prints by Blake, and woodcuts by Wolf Huber, Baldung, Burgkmair, and several of the Italian Renaissance masters. In addition, there are some extremely interesting and rare anonymous prints, such, for example, as an early German painted woodcut of Saint Onophrius and several prints from the primitive Florentine series of engravings known as the Life of Christ and of the Virgin. There are also a number of prints of great importance from the point of view of the history of technique, including etchings by an anonymous member of the Hopfer family, Dürer, Lucas of Leyden, Dirck Vellert, and Elzheimer; an aquatint by Daniel Hopfer; engravings by Pollaiuolo, Mantegna, and Julio Campagnola; woodcuts by Ugo da Carpi, Cranach, Burgkmair, Goltzius, Bewick, and Harvey; and mezzotints by Wallerant Vaillant and Jodocus Bickart.

Although as yet far from having the collection that it is hoped ultimately to form, the Museum nevertheless has already succeeded in getting together a most interesting lot of prints, and, in spite of the fact that there are still serious and obvious lacunae in the historical sequence, the collection is able to offer the student a series of samples of the printed picture in a great many of its various periods and forms.

W. M. I., JR.

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

EARLY JAPANESE SCULPTURE. A collection of Japanese sculpture formed in Osaka by a foreigner in the days when the treasures of old and ruined temples were sold as bric-à-brac, was disposed of after the death of its owner. The Museum was too late to pick out the best pieces, but the collection was traced to a Japanese dealer in San Francisco who showed all the late pieces in their glories of gilt and elaborate haloes and buried the older ones in

by pious if not always very skilful hands, and the fearful monsters trodden under foot have given way to as humble newer demons. The worms and the carelessness of man have left us enough to show two temple guardians, the Japanese Ni-ten, worthy of our admiration. They show us strong, determined heroes not in the exaggerated theatrical poses which later times adopted, not perhaps of the Tempio period, the golden age of Japanese sculpture, but



PAIR OF NI-TEN, JAPANESE, JOGWAN PERIOD, 794-887

the dark depths of his cellar. Fortunately a pair of Ni-ten, temple guardians, were too tall to be altogether concealed under the accumulation of packing cases and broken limbs. A strong, bold head defied the rubbish and darkness and seemed to call attention to a period when the fresh T'ang Chinese art was a revelation to the Japanese and an example followed for many centuries. The Museum had the head brought to the light and the result is the two splendid early wooden Japanese figures which now stand in Room 11, Wing E. They have suffered from the hand of time, each lost an arm in the fray, a hand here and a foot there had to be restored

very little later, of the Jogwan period (794-887), which still corresponds to the Chinese T'ang with which they are closely related.

S. C. B. R.

NEAR EASTERN CALLIGRAPHY. The Museum has recently acquired, by purchase and gift, a number of examples of Near Eastern calligraphy. Two very handsome pages of the eleventh or twelfth century are probably Egyptian, and display a late form of Cufic writing; three later pieces, the gift of Samuel T. Peters, are parts of pages of a Koran, Persian, of the late thirteenth century, attributed to the

calligrapher Yakūt, and written in a beautiful and perfectly developed form of Naskhi.

In connection with these acquisitions, a few general notes upon the art of calligraphy may be of interest.

The Cufic script takes its name from the town of Cufa, which, until the foundation of Bagdad, was the most important center of Moslem life in the East and a place where the transcription of ancient writings was extensively carried on. Here, no doubt, was made the first application of such monumental script to writing upon papyrus.

The traditional origins of the script are so many and various that they cannot be taken up in so short a space as this, but we find that the Cufic writing, as well as the Aramaic, which it followed, had penetrated some distance into Arabia in the first centuries of the Christian era. Whatever the time of its introduction, it was in common use from before the time of Mohammed until the tenth century.

A more cursive form of writing, the Naskhi, was used at the same time for writing on papyrus or parchment, and this gradually forced the Cufic out of general use. The Cufic, in contradistinction to the Naskhi, was the hieratic script, and by the end of the tenth century we find the former used only for monumental inscriptions cut in stone, for legends on coins, and for practically no other literary production in Islam than the transcription of the Koran. The oldest dated copy of the Koran is from 784 A. D. In this, as in all copies of the Koran of the third and fourth centuries of the Hegira (IX-X century A. D.), with one exception, Cufic is used.

The position of the calligraphers of the time, while nominally that of slaves, was comparable to that of the artists of the

Renaissance or the group of trained men whom Charlemagne gathered about himself. They worked under the direct patronage of the Caliph, vying one with another for his favor.

Perhaps the most famous of these men was Yakūt al Mosta-ʿsemi, whose script was called the "model of all calligraphers." He is heard of in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, and was the slave of the last Caliph of Bagdad. The favor accorded him by his master was largely responsible for the perfection which he attained in his art; and when this favor was withdrawn, the quality of his writing began to fail.

At the beginning of his career he used the reed, which served him as pen, with the end cut straight across, then changed to the use of a point cut obliquely, thus gaining a greater contrast in the widths of his lines.

It is said that he copied the Koran one thousand and one times (that favorite number of the Arabians). In Constantinople there are three Korans from his hand, two of which date from the third quarter of the thirteenth century—the seventh of the Hegira. There are also copies in Cairo and Paris attributed to a little earlier date.

Yakūt died at Bagdad in 1298 and was buried in the mosque which he had adorned with lines cut in the stone and with tablets written by himself. He left six pupils who became famous in their day.

C. O. C.

THE CONSOLATION OF ARIADNE. This classic theme is treated by Bryson Burroughs in a painting recently purchased by the Museum out of the Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund and shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions.